



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service
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'Rem Red' Amur honeysuckle



'Rem Red'

Amur honeysuckle

Nearly all wildlife species consume the foods they prefer as soon as they are available and as long as supplies last. Canebirds and songbirds, for example, strip berries from favored plants such as autumn-olive and Tatarian honeysuckle as soon as the berries are ripe and this causes winter food shortages for wildlife. 'Rem Red' Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) helps reduce these shortages.

Wildlife do not prefer the fruit of 'Rem Red' in the fall, so most of it remains on the plant and is available to them during the critical winter period after December. Wildlife also eat the fruit that Amur honeysuckle drops in the winter while they are using its branches for shelter. You can provide a long-term feeding area for wildlife by growing 'Rem Red' along with 'Cardinal' autumn-olive and shrub lespedera whose fruits are eaten early in the fall.

Amur honeysuckle is well suited for ornamental use or as a screen on large lots. The plant is attractive during its spring flowering and late fall fruiting periods. Because it has no objectionable characteristics such as thorns, it is useful in parks and other recreation areas.

Description

Amur honeysuckle, a species introduced from Korea and northern China, is a multistemmed, vase-shaped shrub that grows to a height of 8 to 12 feet. It has foliage like the Tatarian honeysuckle, a plant often used as an ornamental and a source of summer ripening food for wildlife. During May and June, 'Rem Red' bears axillary pairs of white flowers that yellow with age.

The plant's bright red fruit is about one-fourth inch in diameter and matures in late September and October. The fleshy part is about 90 percent of the berry and it covers a flat seed one-eighth inch across. Fruit not eaten in early winter turns dark brown and has a raisinlike appearance.

Suitability

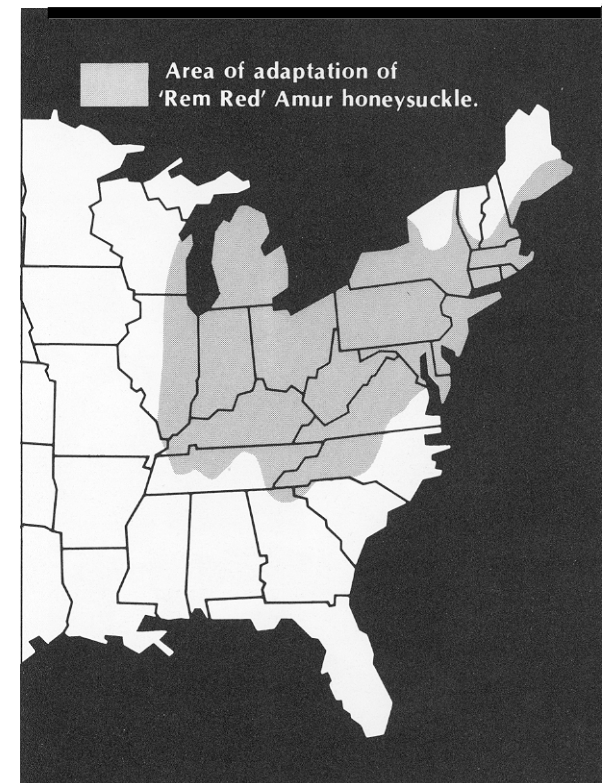
Plantings made over the past 15 years have shown that 'Rem Red' is climatically adapted to an area that stretches from southern Maine down through part of North Carolina and westward to the Missouri border. [See the adaptation map.] It is winter hardy in areas where the average low temperature is between -20° and -30°F.

Amur honeysuckle grows best on deep, well-drained soil, but tolerates somewhat poorly drained soil. The plant grows well in slightly acid soils with a sandy, loamy, or moderately clayey texture. It does not do well on extremely dry or wet sites, and grows poorly where fertility is unusually low. The plant tolerates as much as 50 percent shade, but full sunlight induces the best berry production.



Establishment

Since it is difficult to hold them dormant very long, plant Amur honeysuckle seedlings as early in the spring as possible. Stock for field planting should be at least a foot tall and have a lower stem not less than one-fourth inch thick. Depending on the location, 'Rem Red' can be planted in blocks, strips, or clumps. Space the plants



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6 to 8 feet apart within rows and separate the rows by 10 to 12 feet.

You can establish 'Rem Red' by planting seedlings that are 1 to 2 years old and have no soil around their roots. They should be dug and replanted only when dormant. Take special care to ensure that the roots do not dry during planting.

When planting 'Rem Red,' begin by removing sod and weeds from a circle 2 feet in diameter. Make a slit or hole in the center of the circle and place the roots in it to the same depth that they were rooted in the nursery. Firm the soil around the roots and water immediately. Then mulch around the plant, using pine needles, grass, woodchips, or similar material. Several weeks after planting, sprinkle a handful of 10-10-10 fertilizer around the plant at least 1 foot from the base.

Transplants often grow slowly the first year. But once established, they will reach a height of 6 feet in 3 or 4 years. Plants on fertile, well-drained sites may produce berries as early as the second year.

Propagation

When Amur honeysuckle fruit is ripe and full of juice, it is easy to remove its seeds. Squeeze and break the fruit and then dip it in a large bucket of water. The seeds gradually drop to the bottom of the bucket. Remove the seeds and then dry and clean them.

Use conventional nursery procedures to produce planting stock. 'Rem Red' seed has an embryo dormancy and, if you are planting in spring, the seed should be stratified for 60 to 90 days at 32° to 50°F. Fall planting will accomplish the stratification. One-year-old seedlings should reach a height of 12 to 18 inches with a diameter of one-fourth inch. This size is adequate for field planting. However, 2-year-old plants have a higher survival rate.

Availability

For more information on where to buy plants of 'Rem Red' Amur honeysuckle and how to use and plant them, contact your local SCS office. It is listed in your telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Assistance is available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin,